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SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

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TAGS: PTER PREL KU IZ
SUBJECT: GOK NOT EAGER TO CLAIM "KUWAITI" BOMBER KILLED IN
IRAQ

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (U) Virtually all Kuwaiti news media on November 24 ran a story -- drawn largely from international wire service sources -- stating that a Kuwaiti (or stateless person -- Bidoon -- emanating from Kuwait) was killed by Iraqi State Security on November 23 while attempting to crash a truck bomb into a police station in Anbar province (two newspaper specified that the incident occurred in the city of Al-Qaim).

None of the accounts provided any details concerning the deceased individual, although most reported that he was believed to have been carrying a fake ID issued from Baiji, in Salaadin province. Some accounts stated that the suspect's vehicle contained three tons of chlorine and C4, "as well as other chemical materials." While most accounts stated that the attacker was killed by Iraqi security forces, Al-Watan newspaper wrote that "Iraqi security sources revealed to Al-Watan that the Iraqi forces were able to arrest a Kuwaiti who was driving a truck bomb and planning to blow it up in Al-Qaim, in Anbar province. Sources added that Iraqi security forces are investigating how the Kuwaiti entered Iraq, who was financing him, and the state or organization that facilitated his mission."

¶2. (C) Embassy efforts to obtain further information concerning the incident from MFA or Kuwait State Security (KSS) have, thus far, been unavailing. MFA's Director of Coordination and Follow-Up Ambassador Khaled Mugames told PolCouns on November 24 that the GOK has not yet received any evidence from Iraqi authorities to support the claim that the deceased individual is a Kuwaiti; Mugames surmised that the individual may be a Bidoon or other non-Kuwaiti who had merely spent some time in Kuwait. KSS sources also denied that they had any information on the incident, but told Embassy they would share such information as it became available from Iraqi sources.

¶3. (C) Comment: If the deceased suspect turns out to be a Bidoon, the GOK is likely to eschew any responsibility for him, reflecting its long-held position that most of the Bidoons are, in fact, Iraqis (or citizens of other Arab countries) who have come to Kuwait to take advantage of its stability and social services. If, however, he turns out to have been a Kuwaiti, the GOK will be in for some hand-wringing and soul-searching. The position of the Bidoon in Kuwait causes a significant dilemma for the GOK which is eager, on the one hand, to be seen as treating them in a human and tolerant manner (notwithstanding the fact that many Kuwaitis are hostile to the Bidoon presence and view them as a "fifth column") while, on the other hand, asserting to the U.S. and others that it has a handle on potential extremist elements.

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